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# EULOGY

ON

THOMAS CRAWFORD

BY

THOMAS HICKS, N. A.



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**Local Biographical Series.**

NO. I.







## INTRODUCTORY.

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THERE are transient records of many men whose lives, passed in honorable and dignified pursuits, have reflected credit on our great City. Eminent in works of philanthropy and religion; ripe but unobtrusive scholars and thinkers; distinguished in Commerce, at the Bar, in the Arts, and in Science,—they were the true expositors both of the action and the philosophy of their age. Yet many such men, from not having lived more immediately under public notice, or in public positions, do not become the subjects of elaborate biographical efforts.

The object of this series is to preserve, in a durable and attractive form, and suitable for illustration, some of the now scattered and perishing memorials of the distinguished men of the City of New York.

The publications to follow will be issued in the same style, and rigidly limited to the same number of copies.








## EULOGY.

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ENTURY after century the ocean washes its shores. Dashing in foam against the rocks, or rising with graceful line up the sands, it breaks and recedes. Sometimes the long monotony is interrupted by wreck and loss of life, and we recognize the omnipotence of a merciless element. So Death constantly leads away its victims, tearing the bloom from the cheek of health, and hushing forever the voice of wisdom and friendship. Nature, with her endless variety of life and light, darkness and decay, moves onward; and suddenly we are startled and cast down in sorrow; nations and individuals are common mourners, for a great calamity has fallen upon the world!

Thomas Crawford was born in the City of New York, March 22d, 1813, and died in London, on the 10th of October, 1857. When the news of his death reached Rome, a meeting of the artists was held, composed of Ital-



ians, Germans, French, English, and Americans, at which Mr. Terry and Mr. Freeman, his early associates in Rome, were the officers. After appropriate resolutions had been adopted, Mr. Gibson, the venerable and distinguished English sculptor, spoke of Crawford's genius in the most unqualified language, and the next day wrote to Mr. Terry the following letter:—

"ROME, November 5, 1857.

"DEAR MR. TERRY:—Among the many fine works which our late much lamented friend Crawford has left to this country, I think his model of the Indian is his best work.

"After his death, I began to think what compliment his friends and countrymen could pay to his memory; and it struck me that his model of the Indian might be cast in bronze, and placed in some fine public hall, where the people could see it close to the eye,—there to stand as a monument to the author, an American sculptor of great genius, who distinguished himself at Rome for many years. I remain, dear Mr. Terry, truly yours,

"JOHN GIBSON."<sup>1</sup>

The career of this eminent man is instructive and worthy of commemoration from two points of view,—from the high position he achieved and sustained in his art, and the genial relationship he bore among his fellow-men; as a man of genius, before whose industry and perseverance no obstacle could stand, and a father and friend whose fidelity



and love were one unbroken stream of usefulness and enjoyment; an artist whose name has now become historical, a man whose frank and ardent heart burned in sympathy with every generous impulse.

There is a similarity in the lives of all great men. They are cast in finer moulds; they are moulded in finer clay; and while boyhood is yet in its tingling ardor, restless with exuberant health and spirits, the natural bias of superior intellectuality is shown, and literally the boy is father of the man. Mozart, when four years of age, had learned, almost voluntarily, to play complicated music on the harpsichord; and the drawings of the shepherd-boy Giotto attracted the attention and excited the surprise of the serious Cimabue, whose pupil he became. The boyhood of Crawford exhibited a similar precocity under less fortunate circumstances. The atmosphere which Mozart breathed was one of music; and the genial influences of religion and art charmed into perfection the graceful genius of Giotto. Crawford was born in a new country, at a period when painting was confined almost exclusively to portraiture,—when sculpture as a fine art was unknown, or was only struggling into rude shapes in the stone-cutter's shop. Without the force of



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example, and with surrounding circumstances adverse and ungenial, he showed an appreciation of form, and was constantly seeking the means to carve it into expression. The divine spark was thus kindled, to burn brighter and brighter to the close. Still, it was his good fortune to have a sister some years older than himself, whose cultivation and taste aided in the development of his mind, and whose virtues gave to his moral character the high tone and purity from which it never swerved.

From nine to fourteen years of age, his mind was incessantly occupied with drawing and sketching. For these occupations his lessons were neglected; and when he was not engaged with water-colors, tinting some engraving according to his fancy, the print and picture auctions offered a feast which he could not withstand. He was so determined in his course, and made such progress, that he was placed regularly at a drawing-school, and the hours not engaged there were spent wherever engravings and other works of art were to be seen or sold. The time now arrived when he must engage in some employment; but he obstinately refused to accept the common occupations of store-boy or office-clerk, and the habit of watching the carvings



of ornaments for churches and other buildings was so absorbing, that he placed himself with a wood-carver in preference. Thus the talent with which Nature had endowed him was leading him to that particular branch of art in which he became so distinguished. He then believed, as he said, that, if he could learn the use of the tools, he could "create something beautiful." His talent was developed with wonderful rapidity, and soon outgrew the limit to which wood-carving restricted it. He carried on, at the same time, a study of architecture; and in the reading necessary to this study he became more and more familiar with the great architects and sculptors of Greece and Rome. A little while ago his leisure hours were passed looking at pictures and engravings; now, every moment in which he was not at work he pored over the biographies of those great artists. Stimulated by their renown, the works they had accomplished, and the esteem in which they were held by contemporary greatness, his ambition to do great and noble things was awakened, and he passed from carving in wood to works in marble. We next find him, at the age of nineteen, in the studio of Messrs. Frazee and Launitz, monumental sculptors in this city. He had already



gotten together a collection of casts, among which was one from that noble work of Thorwaldsen's, the Triumph of Alexander. He had also entered the schools of the National Academy of Design, and his student-life was fairly commenced.

A sense of justice and fairness began now, more strongly than ever, to mark his character. He asked his employers to pay him more for his labor; and as they treated his demand with less consideration than he thought it deserved, on the following day he did not return. After several days' absence, Mr. Launitz began to think strangely of it; and as he was passing through Elm Street, he saw Crawford at work in the shop of his former employer, carving ornamental wood-work. He approached him and asked him what it meant. Crawford replied, that he had refused to pay what his labor was worth, and what the carver was ready to pay. "Tut, tut!" said Launitz, "come back to me, Crawford, and I will give you what you want," and the next day found him again at work in marble. He showed the greatest taste in modelling flowers, leaves, and other natural objects of beauty and grace. He also composed for his master several monumental designs, and worked upon portrait busts, among



which was that of Mr. T. H. Perkins of Boston, for the Athenæum, and that of Chief Justice Marshall.

The idea of going some day to Rome had existed in his mind as a vague probability, — a dream around which clustered splendid associations. The destiny of genius was with him; and under the influence of his determined will, this vague dream became a reality. Launitz, who was now his fast friend, had discovered his persevering industry, taste, and facility as a workman, and urged him to go to Rome, where he could study the great works.

In the spring of 1835, preparations were made for his departure; he took leave of his parents, and his sister, who had watched him with such appreciating tenderness, and, accompanied by his friend, went to the vessel. The only voice to say good-bye, and the only hands to shake, were those of Launitz;<sup>2</sup> other hearts were sad, and eyes were moistened by tears, but no group of friends stood on the wharf with parting adieus as the little brig moved out of Burling Slip, while from amid the strange, rough faces of sailors and stevedores beamed that of Launitz, who waved his hand, and with cheering voice cried: "God bless you, Crawford!" The voyage was tem-



pestuous. The vessel was a small merchant-man, and bound to the port of Leghorn. For twenty days Crawford was sick in his berth; he had a brave heart, and although he had but little money, he carried with him two letters which were to him more than gold: one was to Dr. Paul Ruga,<sup>3</sup> a practical man, to put him in the way of doing everything economically; and the other was to Thorwaldsen, introducing him as a young American who desired to study sculpture. These, with a volume of "Jacob Faithful," were given to him by Launitz. He arrived at Leghorn; thence to Civita Vecchia; thence over the Campagna to Rome.

We may conceive the young artist's feelings as he drew near to the Eternal City. This idea, which had been but a few years before only a speck on the horizon of his imagination, which he had watched afar off, at morning, noon, and twilight, and which, in his doubts and fears, had seemed to recede further and further from his vision, was after all no dream. But who shall depict the emotions which throbbed in his head and heart when, after the delay before the Porta Cavallegieri and the surrender of his passports, he passed, for the first time, the forest of columns, crossed the Piazza, looked back upon



the colonnade and façade of the church, surmounted by statues, and over all, towering into the very heavens, the dome and cross of St. Peter's? On they whirled to the Castle of St. Angelo, from the bridge of which he saw the Bernini statues flame out against the sky. The diligence dragged slowly up the narrow streets, and he was in the heart of Rome,—the first American sculptor who had come to study her manifold treasures, and to build a home and fame amid them.

He had an active temperament and an eager mind. Wherever churches, pictures, statues, or whatever else pertained to his art were to be found, his enthusiasm led him. Scarcely pausing to eat or sleep, he hurried from Monte Cavallo to St. Pietro in Vincoli and the Capitol. In the long galleries of the Vatican

"He lingered, poring on the memorials  
Of the world's youth; through the long burning day  
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor when the moon  
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,  
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed  
And gazed, till meaning on his ardent mind  
Flashed like strong inspiration."

The studios of Thorwaldsen were in a little street leading out of the Piazza Barberini. They covered a large area of ground, and



were crowded with the works of a long and active life. Thither went the young American student with his letter of introduction. When the great Dane had finished reading it, his broad Northern nature warmed up; he took both Crawford's hands in his, welcomed him in the most friendly manner, told him he had plenty of room in his studios, and that he might come there and study when and as long as he pleased. Crawford gladly accepted the generous offer, and went immediately to work.

Thorwaldsen<sup>4</sup> never permitted his students to copy his own works, but recommended to them the study of the antique, casts from which abounded in his collection. Crawford began to set up a figure in clay from one of these; and after he had worked enthusiastically for some hours, the burly figure of the Dane approached him, scanned his effort, and kindly and carefully explained to him the error of his proceeding, telling him the necessity of getting his masses in just proportion and balance before he gave attention to the detail. Crawford wrote some time after: "These few words of instruction from this great artist gave me more insight into my art and were of more service to me than all else put together that I have ever seen and heard."



He lost no time; every hour in the day was occupied in severe study, and most of the hours of the night. He modelled and drew from the nude in the French Academy; apportioned his time so as to visit regularly some work or collection of the antique, improving his taste, enlarging his judgment, and carefully writing out his observations,—which were embodied in letters to his sister and his friends. His imagination and invention were already urging him to make compositions. He put them up in clay, but, dissatisfied with them, he broke them down and put up others; among the first of these that he finished was a figure which he called "Autumn." He had now been in Rome more than a year, and occupied a corner of Velatti's studio—the famous animal painter—in the Via Margutta. His pecuniary resources were reduced to the last extreme. Still he did not relax his labor. His poetic soul was bearing him upward; physical want was pressing him downward, but he worked on. Dr. Ruga wrote to Launitz: "Your friend Crawford works incessantly. He takes no relaxation; and if he continues work as he is now doing, his health will suffer." Everybody in any way brought into contact with him was impressed with the same facts. The rumor came up to Flor-



ence that there was a young American sculptor in Rome working day and night; and that he was struggling against many difficulties, not the least among which was want. His talent and perseverance were beginning to attract attention, and he was willing to labor in his art for any remuneration. During this year, 1837, he modelled in ten weeks seventeen busts, to be put in marble, and also copied in marble the figure of Demosthenes in the Vatican. The sums he received from these works were about the same as the wages of an ordinary day-laborer; but, thoroughly in earnest, and actuated by a noble enthusiasm, he knew that excellence was only attained by incessant labor, and, although want lay grimly across his track, gallantly and buoyantly he kept his course.

In a cheerful letter to his sister at this time, when telling of all he was doing, he says: "You see how I am occupied, and what a diversity of subjects I am dipping into. There is more truth in the old proverb, 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' than appears at first sight." The aptness of this trite saying indicates the will, the perseverance, the indomitable energy, which impelled him toward success.

Far into the night, for weeks, a lamp was



burning in a small room in the Via del Orto di Napoli, now occupied as his studio. One idea filled his mind, which he labored to express. At length his work was completed, and the thought that had not left him day or night stood in daring relief. Artists saw it, and said it was full of promise,—a verdict not against him. Laymen saw it, and pronounced it a success,—an opinion, if not so flattering, of much more importance, because there was a market in that direction, and his work was yet in perishable material. His health had suffered, the unremitted toil of mind and body had broken it down; but still his face was set hopefully to the future. Those months of labor and privation were in the past, at which he never turned to look. Although the path was dim and obscure, he had dashed forward triumphantly, and Orpheus, his first work of importance, will be forever the type of youth and genius. The simple myth, although the statue bears it out, was not all the sculptor meant. He was young and aspiring, and a shadow of uncertainty hung over the present. The statue, replete with youth, grace, and energy, holding the lyre, bends eagerly forward, the right hand shading the eyes as they try to fathom the uncertain future. It is the artist's aspira-



tion for the ideal, his search for the perfect beauty that forever eludes him.

Through all these trials of distressing want he was uncomplaining, and his cheerful, straightforward manliness began to make friends, among whom, active in the advancement of his interests, was Mr. Greene, the American Consul then in Rome. Charmed by the private character and extraordinary talents of the artist, this gentleman never lost the opportunities which his official and social position constantly afforded him, of introducing Crawford to distinguished strangers who visited Rome. One day he received a piece of paper on which was scrawled in tremulous characters, "Come and see me," signed "Crawford." He hastened to his lodgings, where he found him prostrated with a fever of the most malignant type, induced by an overtaxed brain, accompanied by delirium, and succeeded by long prostration. He immediately procured for him the best medical advice, and superintended the nursing himself. As soon as he was enough convalescent to be moved, he took him to his own house, and carefully watched his recovery. Had it not been for this intelligent and friendly vigilance, nothing short of a miracle could have brought Crawford through this sickness; as it



was, he slowly recovered; his robust energy was reduced, but the vital and recuperative powers of his mind and body hurried him again to his work.

Before the end of this year, 1839, he had completed two bas-reliefs for the Prince Demidoff of St. Petersburg, one representing Hercules arrested by Diana when in the act of carrying away the golden-horned stag; the other was a group of Centaurs. He also made a group for Mr. Tiffany, of Baltimore, whose subject was, "Lead us into Life Everlasting," and an ideal statue for Mr. Jonathan Phillips, of Boston, which he also repeated for Mr. Tiffany, as he did the Centurion for Mr. Paine. Also, busts of Commodore Hull, Sir Charles Vaughan, Mr. Greene, Mr. Sumner, and Mr. Kenyon, the English poet. For the Orpheus he had no commission, but he had determined to put it in marble; and while he was waiting for the stone to arrive from Carrara, he modelled an equestrian portrait of Washington.

The day of his success was dawning. Mr. Kenyon<sup>5</sup> wrote to a friend:—

"If Crawford is sustained in his art and keeps his health, he will be the first of modern sculptors; nay, an American may rival Phidias. He has completed the model of his Orpheus, which some of the best judges,



even in the mould, compare to the Apollo. Gibson, chary and cold in praise, spoke of it to me as a most extraordinary promise of eminence in the art. I know that Thorwaldsen (himself the greatest of modern names, not even excepting Canova) has expressed the same opinion, and esteems Crawford as his successor in the severe classic style of sculpture. . . . I send you some lithographic engravings of the Orpheus. At Mr. R.'s and elsewhere in London I have shown the print, to the great admiration of all who saw it. But Crawford is struggling for bread. The moneyed Americans who visit Rome follow names, and as yet know not the rising merit of their countryman. Crawford has the merit of virtuous habits, and an honest, independent spirit. . . . We shall live to see him the most eminent artist of our times. I only wish he were an Englishman. . . . The most delightful part of his mind is the utter absence of conceit, the independent but natural formation of his views of art, his boldness of opinion, and, withal, his real diffidence, and desire still further to advance his intellect and powers. He is the artist who, and whose works, most struck me in all our journeyings on the Continent; and I write the above, as you will know who know me, from admiration of a man of merit. He lives on a crust, and aid at this critical moment of his career will be everything to him."

Mr Charles Sumner,<sup>6</sup> who was in Rome at this time, was impressed in the same way, and his letters were testimonies to the same facts. Thus Thorwaldsen, Gibson, Kenyon, Mr. Charles Sumner, and Mr. Greene, all marked out for Crawford a brilliant future. Their conclusions and expressions at that time, with regard to him, were most prophetic. Sumner,



through his letters, had already created an interest for the Orpheus among some of his friends in Boston; and when he returned, which was early in 1840, he completed a subscription to purchase it. In the mean time Crawford was sadly oppressed with poverty, literally living "on a crust," and without a murmur wore away the days of suffering with patient and persevering industry, driving all his studies forward with an energy that his weakened condition could not yet sustain. It was surprising, even under this system of constant mental application, to see the rapidity with which his intellect and judgment matured. He was persuaded by a friend to visit Florence, where he had not yet been, in order to see the art and artists there, and to secure some necessary relaxation. He had visited Naples the year before; and a letter at that time, expressing his opinions upon what he saw there, and upon art in general, is marked with the hesitation of a man feeling his way in the dark. But one written now from Florence, after familiar acquaintance with men and art in that city, is filled with a broad criticism, which is not only wise and just, but possesses a daguerreotype fidelity that history will prove more and more true.



He left Florence with some feelings of depression, for there was an air of sunny lightness about the city and in the valley of the Arno that did not quite accord with the difficulties he had to contend with; and the thrift and prosperity of his contemporaries there formed a strong contrast with his own hard struggles. But a true enthusiasm and ambition kept him cheerful. He had never flagged; he would not now; and when he arrived at Rome he found a letter from Sumner, containing the order for the Orpheus in marble, to be placed in the Boston Athenæum, and a draft for the money. There came with it, too, the assurance that an interest for his work was growing up at home, and earnest words of friendship, which broke about him like sunshine. The Orpheus was shipped, and arrived at its destination. The next mail from Boston to Rome brought several orders to execute original works. Orders also flowed in from other sources. He had struck the tide of success, and the struggle for bread was over. He now had to do with thought and invention only; the means were afforded, and noble and grand works were to be achieved. His fame spread; distinguished travellers sought him out, and he grew more and more in favor. Other commissions came



in, — not, however, large enough to satisfy his ambition, but sufficiently so to prove that he was appreciated, and that the first ordeal was passed.

He had large studios fitted up in the Piazza Barberini, with sufficient accommodations for his increased requirements. The sudden prosperity which on every side surrounded him stimulated his energies; and while he enjoyed these new conditions, he knew that a true fame was only to be secured through unremitted toil. Fully persuaded of this truth, he never for a moment lost sight of his proper vocation, and society, with all its brilliant allurements, could never seduce him from his art. In 1843 his studios were already crowded with original works, and had become one of the centres of attraction to strangers visiting the studios of Rome.

Through every adversity and temptation, his honor, his integrity, had passed without taint. His character had retained the simple innocence of childhood, and was as pure as it was manly. He had produced an ideal head of Vesta, which, as a work of art, became the object of interest that winter in Rome. The Orpheus, an expression of heroic manhood inspired by genius, had secured to him noble and permanent friendships. In the Vesta



there was a lovely innocence and beauty which became instrumental in securing to the artist the happiest and most exquisite domestic relations, and which should be as immortal in the romance of affection as the fabled statue of Pygmalion.

In 1844 he came to this country and was married to Miss Louisa Ward, daughter of the late Samuel Ward, of this city, and returned to Rome in the course of the same year, carrying with him commissions for some important works. He had already heard of the death of Thorwaldsen, between whom and himself there had existed most genuine friendship. For although he remained but a short time in Thorwaldsen's studio, he visited it frequently, and there continued between them an intimacy and confidence, which, on the part of the Dane, was a feeling that in Crawford he would have a worthy successor, while the American revered Thorwaldsen's great genius and loved him as his master and friend.

From this time forward Crawford's genius began to intensify, and he worked even with more zeal than ever, and with still higher aims of excellence and more perfect success, while his fame was spreading throughout Europe and America. In 1849 he came to the



United States; and while on a visit to some relatives at Bordentown, New Jersey, he read in a newspaper that the City of Richmond had appropriated a specific sum of money to erect a monument to Washington, that competitors without distinction had been invited, and that the designs were to be submitted at a certain date. The subject had been a favorite one with Crawford. He had made several designs of it, the first one eleven years before, in those days of gloomy struggle in the Orto di Napoli. But his judgment, taste, artistic power, and fortune were all changed. The old designs were not appropriate; besides, they were in Rome. He left Bordentown immediately for Boston, and, to the astonishment of artists and laymen, in a few days he had his model completed and forwarded to Richmond. There were many competitors, but the superiority of his design over all the others presented was so apparent that the committee decided in his favor without hesitation. He also received some orders from the United States Government, which were afterwards considerably augmented. He returned to Rome in the following year, 1850, and this magnificent work, requiring years for its completion, was begun. He also modelled a statue of Beethoven, to be placed in the



Music Hall in Boston, which, with the statues for the Washington monument, were to be cast in bronze at Munich.

As these works were completed, his studios were crowded by visitors; and when it was announced that the colossal equestrian statue of Washington was ready for exhibition, for days the Piazza Negroni was thronged with royal and civic equipages. The royalists of Europe, republicans from all countries, savans, connoisseurs, wealth, beauty, and fashion, even the common people of Rome, mingled with the vast concourse, and paid their homage to the genius of the American sculptor. His growing fame was astonishing, built up as it was, not with decaying and meretricious elements, but with stern industry and an unswerving artistic conscience. His friends, too, could now look back to those days of grim poverty with the consolation that his own rigid adherence to everything that was gallant and upright had developed his power and placed him in the first rank of his profession.

In the early part of 1855, the Beethoven was cast in bronze in Munich, and when completed, so grand and noble was its character that it filled the imaginations of the music-loving people with such memories of the



great composer that nothing but a public festival would satisfy them. "The artist's permission had been obtained to place it in the concert hall, but the general musical director, Lachner, would not allow the statue to be placed in an ordinary hall, but appointed an especial concert for the 26th of March, 1855, —the anniversary of the great master's death, —saying, 'That day shall be marked by a *fête* of art.' A pedestal of six feet in height was prepared, having a background of dark green velvet, supported by gilt columns, and the statue was placed upon it, in the midst of a forest of flowers and cypresses, and lit by more than a hundred gas-lights. The concert hall was filled to overflowing; King Maximilian and the queen attended in full state; and now began the execution of Beethoven's best compositions, by more than three hundred musicians and singers, male and female. Madame Daubach, the first actress, recited a prologue in verse, written by M. Dingelstedt, the director of the theatre. The splendor of the *fête* surpassed anything ever given in Munich. The king remarked to a gentleman present, 'I only regret that this masterpiece of art should not remain in Munich.'" When the statue was placed in the Hall in Boston, another festival was given, at which Mr. W. W.



Story, himself a sculptor and musician, read an original poem, eulogizing the success with which the artist had rendered the great characteristics of the great composer.

Crawford's name had now become familiar in Munich, and when the Washington was cast, the verdict upon its merits was unanimous; he was made an honorary member of the Royal Academies of Munich and St. Petersburg, and during the year the Academy of St. Mark, at Florence, conferred upon him the same distinction. In such esteem was the Washington held by the workmen in the foundry, and so entirely had the artist won their regard, that when it left Munich they would not allow the ordinary laborers to touch the cases in which it was packed, or put it upon the conveyance, but did all that themselves, while the roads and bridges were, by order of the king, made free for it to pass over. The same good fortune attended it on this side of the Atlantic; for when it reached Richmond, the enthusiastic citizens drew it to its destined place in Capitol Square.<sup>7</sup>

Crawford's genius differed from his contemporaries in almost every respect. His compositions were the result of a mental process as rapid as thought itself. His execution was



surprising; indeed, it had become a proverb among the sculptors and other artists in Rome, when they were told he had made a new group, that he pitched his clay together with a trowel, struck it first with his right hand and then with his left, turned it thrice upon its pedestal, and it was finished. With this wonderful facility of execution he combined the highest grace and classic power. He was not a sculptor merely because he had a talent for the mechanical use of tools, and thought marble a beautiful material upon which to display it, but because he was a poet, and his mind was so filled with the forms of beauty, purity, and strength, in such clear distinctness and reality, that he had no peace day or night, until they were wrought into actual and imperishable form. No other language was adequate to express his thoughts. He was a natural sculptor. So active was his creative faculty, and so fertile his invention, that he could only make way for new creations by incessant labor, and as quickly as one work was finished another was begun. His perceptions were acute and exact; his powers of memory prodigious. His fancy was graceful and dignified; his character bold, and thus his scholarship was thorough and truthful. Under this rare combination, the rudest



sketch, no less than the most elaborate work, was stamped with those evidences which belong alone to genius.

From the number and variety of his works, together with the rapidity of their execution, it might be inferred that he did not bestow upon them the elaboration which sculpture requires. But in a careful examination of their intrinsic merit, if such deficiencies are discovered, they are the results of two facts with which he was perfectly acquainted. First, that the imagination and other high faculties of the mind, when educated and intelligent, are affected by the very reverse of those qualities which are merely visual, microscopic, and mechanical; and, secondly, that his invention was so fertile, his thoughts and fancy so teeming with forms of grandeur and beauty, that the necessity to create new works was imperative. Some such charges were made against Michel Angelo, — how groundlessly, history is perpetually demonstrating. Does it ever occur to a cultivated mind that the Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel are wanting in finish? Still the works of Carlo Dolce have many admirers, and Michel Angelo has left the indisputable proof of his ability to lose in monotonous softness all traces of other character, and has showed his con-




tempt for it in a solitary bas-relief in the Uffizzi gallery at Florence. Crawford also, in some of his works, carried tenderness and elaboration into the superlative degree. In the group of the Children in the Wood, nothing is omitted that belongs to the story. The shoes, the little birds and leaves, are all wrought out with the utmost truthfulness, while the touching pathos of the sleeping children is consistent and exquisite. But we may safely assert that there is not a work in sculpture, ancient or modern, that surpasses in elaboration the portrait bust of Mrs. Crawford, executed in 1846. Every attribute of the best art is retained in its fullest expression. Intellectuality, dignity, and womanly sweetness, glow with the artist's skill. The effect of the whole is classical, preserving in almost faultless symmetry the minutest individuality of character. This is carried with studied particularity into the laces and flowers. Their ornate and delicate tracery is so subdued as to heighten the imposing perfection of the work. In the entire range of sculptured portraiture it has neither superior nor equal.

It is not, however, by these qualities that succeeding generations will estimate the works of Crawford. Admirable as they are, they



belong to a lower plane of labor. It is the difference between Phidias and Praxiteles,—the creative and constructive power of the ideal, and the patient finish of a sluggish invention. His superiority is shown in the universality of his subjects, and the originality of their conception and treatment. It is remarkable how the course of study he adopted secured to him the true development of his faculties. His first studies were naturally among the celebrated antiques. This led him to make most of his earliest compositions of a classical character, in order to perfect his knowledge of anatomy. As he acquired more skill and mastery over his tools and material, he selected his subjects from the Bible and New Testament, familiarizing himself with treatment of more complicated draperies, preparing for the most difficult works; so that when the large orders from Government were tendered to him, he was competent to accept and execute them with equal honor to himself and the nation. His works naturally classify themselves into three divisions. First: The Mythological, including the Orpheus, Genius of Mirth, the Muse, Autumn, Cupid, Flora, Io, Peri, Apollo, Homer, Diana, Vesta, Sappho, the Archer, Paris presenting the Apple to Venus, Mercury and Psyche,





Hebe and Ganymede, Jupiter and Psyche, Psyche Found, Nymph and Satyr, a series of four bas-reliefs, Boy and Goat, etc.

His Scriptural compositions were Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, David before Saul, the Shepherds and Wise Men before Christ, a group of twenty-four figures; Christ disputing with the Doctors, twelve figures; Christ ascending from the Tomb, and Christ raising Jairus's daughter, the Daughter of Herodias, Repose in Egypt, Eve tempted, Eve with Cain and Abel, Lead us into Life Everlasting, a single figure of Christ, Christ blessing little Children, and Christ at the Well of Samaria. This, however, is not a complete list.

But, notwithstanding the high excellence of his earlier productions, his genius only found its full scope in works of history and allegory, of which, in all, there are more than thirty; and the latest of these are the best, for the reason that the subjects brought him at once into the vital contemporary history of his country and excited his patriotism.

The Virginia monument is nobly conceived. The colossal statue of Washington, including the horse, is twenty-five feet high. The pedestal rests upon a star-shaped elevation with six points, upon which stand colossal statues of Lee, Mason, Nelson, and Patrick Henry,



who, with his arms raised and extended, is in the act of speaking, while Jefferson, in an attitude of earnest contemplation, holds a pen, with the Declaration of Independence. These figures, which are to be in bronze, excited great admiration when they were exhibited in Rome.

The figures for one of the pediments on the extension of the Capitol at Washington are allegorical, and filled with historic interest. In the centre stands a figure of Liberty, with appropriate symbols. At her right, a soldier in Continental uniform is drawing his sword from his scabbard, as if to defend the rights of the statesman who sits near him, absorbed in deep thought. Then two youths are coming forward to serve cheerfully in their country's cause; next, the schoolmaster is teaching a lad; and the last figure on this side is the mechanic. Upon the left is, first, the pioneer or backwoodsman, who, with an axe, is clearing the forests, emerging from which is the hunter, with his dogs and game. The next is the figure of the Indian, broken and bowed before the progress of the civilized white man. Seated by his side are a squaw and child, and near them are the graves of their fathers. These are all full statues. The figure of Liberty in the centre of the pedi-



ment, and those nearest to her on the right and left, are colossal. They are conceived in such simplicity, and the story is so clearly and forcibly told, that even a child may at once detect the meaning. This was a characteristic of Crawford. While he maintained in theory and asserted in practice the most exalted principles of art, he seized the idea in all its relations, with a broad and universal significance, which made his meaning clear at once. He maintained, in common with the great masters, that the office of art was not to gratify the senses or to delight the fancy, but to enlarge and enlighten the understanding, by communicating to it ideas of simple incident, profound sentiment, and universal truth.

The designs for the bronze door of the Capitol, with their superb, gigantic figures of Law and Justice, were conceived in the same spirit. But the most sublime of all his creations is the colossal embodiment of America. It is the figure of a woman erect with majesty, robed to the feet, and swayed with an indescribable grace. The face is filled with pride, triumph, and magnanimity; yet the daring and power which pervade it make it stern and awful. It seems like a concentration of the Phidian Jupiter and the Moses



of Buonarrotti, combining the omnipotence of the god with the unrelenting decrees of the prophet. The head is covered with a helmet, on the crest of which cowers an eagle, whose plumage, sloping backward, blends with masses of richly-braided hair. The right hand rests upon the hilt of a sword, the point of which is poised at her feet. The left hand holds a wreath and rests on a shield embossed with stars. It is to be cast in bronze, and to stand on the summit of the dome. This is the work that received the last touches from his hand, and as it is preëminently his grandest conception, it is fitting that it should stand as the climax of his fame.

From his first essays as a student to his last labors, he was actuated by the most exalted desire of greater and greater perfection in his art. He sought to increase the renown of his country, both by augmenting its treasures and perpetuating the history and spirit of its institutions. His own ideas upon this subject, expressed in a letter to a friend in 1843, are worthy of record here. He says:

"I have commenced a small statue of Mirth for Mr. Hicks, of New York. The model will be completed in about a month. It is a boy of seven or eight years, dancing in great glee, and tinkling a pair of cymbals, the music of which seems to amuse him exceedingly. The



sentiment is joyousness throughout. It is evident no thought of the future troubles his young mind. And he may consider himself very fortunate in being made in marble, for thus his youth remains without change.

"I intend commencing seven bas-reliefs, which will contain compositions representing the great poets. I have Homer, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, and Milton, and an ideal arrangement of Apollo with the horse Pegasus. I may possibly add Shakespeare, but I think of reserving him to be placed in another series intended for the Tragic Poets. . . . I have composed many other things, and I regret that I have not a hundred hands to keep pace with the workings of the mind. The most important of these will be, perhaps, illustrations of the whole of Ovid. I intend engraving these; for to model them would require too much time, unless they were ordered. They will be simple drawings in outline, composed with a sculptured feeling, in such a way that they might be modelled in bas-relief, and still preserve the harmony of composition, so necessary in Art. I have often thought that such works as these might be ordered in plaster if not in marble. The expense would be but one half, probably, and they would answer every purpose connected with the ornament of our literary institutions. Many persons think it absolutely necessary that all works of sculpture should be in marble. If it is possible, so much the better; but, after all, casts give to the instructed mind quite as much pleasure; and the reputation of the artist may be placed as well upon fine impressions of his works *in gesso* as though they were executed in more durable material. Witness the Triumph of Alexander, the great work of modern times. It was ordered to be made in plaster of Paris originally. Besides, we have the immortal casts of the antique throughout the world. I do not mean to say that I should desire an order for a statue in



plaster, nor for a single *bas-relief*; but an order for a series of compositions I should consider a most fortunate consummation, and devoutly to be wished."

In another part of his letter Crawford says:

"I look to the formation of a pure school of Art in our glorious country. We have surpassed already the Republics of Greece in our political institutions, and I see no reason why we should not attempt to approach their excellence in the fine arts, which, as much as anything, has secured undying fame to Grecian genius."

He lived to fulfil these desires in the Government commissions, of which he left models from which the works will be completed in enduring bronze and marble, according to his designs. In Rome, his establishment consisted of twelve grand studios, and for the last six years the incessant clang of mallet and chisel was ringing from a hundred busy hands "to keep pace with the workings of his mind." We may estimate that he spent in active labor about nineteen years out of the twenty-two from the time he first arrived in Rome till his death, allowing one year for his last illness, and two years for his visits to this country, mainly made for relaxation and to recruit his health. This is an average of more than three finished works, many of them colossal, for each year; or in all about sixty that were finished. He also left about fifty



sketches in plaster, and designs of various kinds. This industry and executive achievement, in the same space of time, has no parallel; and it is only reasonable to assume that had he enjoyed the full command of his mental and physical health which favored the great Scandinavian to the age of seventy-four, stimulated and sustained by the surprising growth of artistic culture and demand for art in the United States, he would have secured a celebrity unknown to the history of Art.

And, indeed, between Thorwaldsen and Crawford there was a singular and touching connection, in some respects so remarkable that it is well worth a moment's attention.

A poor young Dane, of fine presence and gallant nature, left Copenhagen with the determination to become a sculptor, and after a perilous voyage passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and through the Mediterranean Sea to the Bay of Naples, whence he came to Rome, and became the renowned sculptor of the age.

A young countryman of the sculptor's, Lauenitz, who had worked in his studio at Rome, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to a strange country, and set up his business in New York. At the time of his arrival, an American lad, with peering curiosity, was watching the col-



ors and forms of various objects in Nature, walking up and down the streets, looking at pictures, and whatsoever there was of Art to attract and fascinate his young mind. After many difficulties and delays, Launitz becomes the boy's tutor, fills his mind with anecdotes of art, and aids in sending him to Rome. This youth, now grown to manhood, leaves these shores as Thorwaldsen did those of Denmark, and after a like perilous voyage through the same straits, along the African coasts, arrives in Italy, and becomes the pupil, friend, and finally successor, to the noble-hearted Dane. But here the resemblance ends; and in the hour of his maturing fame, in the full development of his powers, when the people of both Continents are watching his career with delight, by the Providence of God he was removed from the sphere of his labors, and the dust has already settled upon the implements of his Art.

Thus far we have considered the public career of Crawford, and now some personal recollections may not be out of place.

I arrived in Rome in October, 1845. Among the first persons who called on me was Crawford. I had never seen him before, and was forcibly struck with his appearance and manner. He was very cordial, welcomed me to



Rome, and said it was the true place for an artist. While he talked I watched his marked and handsome features, particularly his eyes, which were large, blue, and expressive. His figure was straight and muscular, indicating almost robust health. There was a slight nervousness in his manner, as if to say, "Well, I must bid you good-morning and go to work;" and occasionally a shade of expression on his features of coldness and dissatisfaction, which never entirely disappeared, even when his mind relaxed in the society of his most intimate friends. During the winter of 1847 and '48 I was a great deal at his house. Some of the pleasantest hours I had in Rome were passed there. The drawing- or sitting-room was large; the walls were hung with dark maroon paper, and covered with rare and curious gems of art. A wood fire was always burning in the open fireplace, and "Cato," a large black dog, stretched before it, dozed with his head on his paws. Mr. George S. Hillard, Hon. Franklin Dexter, Mr. George W. Curtis, Mr. William W. Story, and Mr. Charles C. Perkins were constant evening visitors, and the hours passed away in music and conversation, or some other pleasant entertainment. Many such evenings were passed in the kind and agreeable society of the host and hostess.



Crawford had lived in Rome so long that he had made a large number of Italian friends. He spoke the language perfectly, and they were proud both of his artistic and social position.

When the revolution broke out in 1848, and the spirit of Republicanism spread over Europe, like a flame over the prairie, the Civic Guard was enrolled in Rome, and they insisted that Crawford should join it as an officer. When he appeared in his uniform, some of his countrymen questioned his right as an American citizen to identify himself with the Romans. He replied that he had property at stake in Rome, and that if he had not, to be the defender of liberty there would not alienate him from his own country. One day, shortly after this, I was to ride with Mr. Story beyond the walls of the city. It was early in March,—one of those perfect Italian days; the air as balmy as our own June, the sky serene, and the Campagna already covered with violets. In the Piazza di Spagna we met Crawford and invited him to join us; but he excused himself, and asked where we were going; Story said to Monte Mario. "Well," he replied, with a boyish jocularity, "I'm going to Mount Guard." There was an element of unaffected cheerfulness in



his character which made it refreshing and delightful, and a vein of drollery and love of sport which relieved the earnest and serious cast of his mind. There was no jealousy in his nature, and it was entirely free from detraction. He was loved by many of his professional brethren, and by his manly independence, unbiased appreciation, and uniform politeness, held the respect and esteem of all. His social qualities were admirable. No greater proof is needed of this than is shown in the number of his friends, and the manner in which they clung to him, no less in his struggles than in his successes. Circumstances excluded him in early life from the society of influential persons, and at the age of twenty-one the most important person that he knew was his employer, Mr. Launitz. But once abroad in the atmosphere of Art, and in contact with persons whose cultivation was equal to the comprehension of his character, he made friendships which held as firmly to his memory as they did to him in life; and that coldness of manner which sometimes seemed like indifference toward those who desired to be on equal and kind terms with him, must find its explanation in the fact that till within the last few years he chafed under an unsatisfied ambition, desiring to



achieve larger works than had yet been ordered, and with his restless mind constantly fixed upon the future, he sometimes lost sight of the present,—seeming indifferent where really he did not feel so. I remember being puzzled by this same trait of his manner till I met him in 1850, in Broadway, immediately after his arrival from Virginia. The expression on his face was that of perfect happiness, and his unconstrained and cordial greeting fairly electrified me. On my remarking how well he looked, he said, "I feel well; I have received the Virginia commission, and it is the first real chance I have ever had to do what I want to." He now had the opportunity to secure a permanent fame, and after this I never observed the old peculiarity of his manner. I am entirely satisfied that it was not the result of coldness or indifference to his friends. Indeed, I know that he was constantly endeavoring, in the days of his prosperity, to pay with double interest the obligations which early adversity had forced him to assume. One instance of this is connected with the bust of Mr. Sumner, which he modelled in 1839. It remained in plaster for several years, but one day Mr. Sumner's mother was surprised with delight at receiving it in marble,



with a simple note from the artist, asking her to accept it as a token of his gratitude for the friendship of her son.

Mr. Charles C. Perkins, a man distinguished for genuine love for, and accomplishments in, the fine arts, had been a true friend to Crawford. Desiring to present to the Music Hall of Boston a bronze statue of Beethoven, he commissioned Crawford to prepare the model. He laid by everything, and entered with enthusiasm upon the work. When it was completed he refused any remuneration, insisting that his labor should be regarded not only as his contribution to an object in which he shared the interest of his friend, but also as a recognition of the faithful friendship that subsisted between them. Many more instances could be cited to prove this trait of his character; but an extract from one of his letters, bearing the date of April 22, 1844, will express it more fully. He says:

"You were my firm, fast friend in the hour of adversity, and you will be so now, after the storm has passed away. I would offer to you the fullest expression of gratitude that ever left a warm heart. I would convince you that I am no changeling, but words aid me little in doing this; so, —, be careful how you extend your hand upon my arrival, or I shall be likely to carry it off with me. Remember me to — and —, also —, should you see them. They are men after my own feel-



ings. You make a glorious quartetto, and sing admirably together. I am anxiously preparing myself to enter without a discordant note, and so help along the music. God bless you, and believe me ever your affectionate friend."

His domestic nature was ample and lovely. During all those early years of uncomplaining want, his letters to his sister were filled with the tenderest, confiding affection. She knew how he was suffering, and, willing to make any sacrifice for him, offered him the small sums that she could save from her own supply, but he positively refused to accept them, and wrote: "I am a man, and I will fight my own way through."

In a letter from Leghorn, immediately after his arrival, he says:

"I have taken a bold step, and if ambition and perseverance in my studies will place me where I so much wish to be, I shall not regret the movement I am making. I am determined either to be at the top of the ladder or buried under it. I know I am venturing much; it is what few have dared to do. Nearly all young artists have proceeded on this road protected and encouraged by some kind patron, who had extended his hand to them previous to their departure from home, and who placed them in a state of independence upon their arrival in the School of Art. *I am alone*; and do not think me vain when I say, that I believe my fortitude is sufficient to surmount all the difficulties which may be in my path to eminence."

How nobly he merited his success! As a



husband and parent, his relations were beautiful. The romance of his courtship and marriage grew in after-life into a more transfigured and dignified affection; while his children had in him a playmate no less than a protector. And thus he found at his own fireside that light and cheerfulness and devotion, so indispensable to a mind goaded by ambition and jaded by toil.

In the Spring of 1856 he came to this country, to make further arrangements relating to his State and Government commissions. Having completed them, he returned in the Autumn to Rome, leaving his wife and children here, and accompanied by his devoted sister. While on the voyage, his eyes troubled him, becoming very sensitive to the light and slightly inflamed. Believing it to be only temporary debility of the lid, he thought very little of it. But by the time he reached Rome his left eye had become painful, and assumed an aggravated and angry look. He went energetically to work, but the difficulty increased, and his medical advisers persuaded him to suspend his daily work, which he did reluctantly. But up to the last hour of his sojourn in Rome, he went the rounds of his studios once or twice a day, giving directions to his workmen and urging



forward his great undertakings. A surgical examination was made, but finding no relief, he concluded to go to Paris and secure the most efficient aid that science could supply.

He was accompanied from Rome by Mr. Terry, whose indispensable assistance was so delicately tendered, that Crawford regarded him rather as a travelling companion than a nurse. After thorough investigation, the Paris surgeons pronounced the malady to be a cancerous tumor behind the eye, but rooted in the brain, and thus utterly discouraged the idea of his recovery. His wife, who had been summoned from America without his knowledge, still hopeful of the best, concealed from him this decision, and from Paris they went to London, allured by the prospect of specific treatment, but he had passed beyond the limit of human benefit.

Through those long succeeding months of physical suffering, dark agonizing days and darker nights, no murmur escaped his lips. His busy mind still planned new works, and notwithstanding the torture which racked his spirit, and the sickness which weakened his energies, he still believed, with almost youthful enthusiasm, he would soon be well, and again at work in his Roman studio. Yet, day by day, hour by hour, the fatal disease was



drying up the fountains of his life. Still, pointing upward and onward, the Angel of Hope lighted, though dimly, his dark and downward path, and on the first of September, two months before his death, they told him he must die. At these words his whole frame relaxed, his hands fell listlessly in his lap, he bowed his head, and with a tone of abiding faith and resignation said, "God's will be done."

In the theatre of Copenhagen, brilliant with light, crowded with the gayest people of the city, sat the venerable and fame-crowned sculptor of Denmark, surrounded by devoted friends. In the midst of one of Beethoven's grandest symphonies, while its sounding harmonies filled the great space from floor to ceiling, the old Thorwaldsen's head sank upon his breast, and through the gayety and glow, and the mysterious music, his immortal spirit passed from earth to heaven. And thus ended *his* long and successful life.

Not such was the end of his illustrious pupil. But from the closing scene in the history of Crawford, characterized as it was, through all its tortures, by heroic resignation, unwavering faith, and Christian virtue, we will not lift the veil. His name is written on the roll of famous men. He has a



place amid the few who have accomplished noble works. But while we mourn his loss, honoring him for all his excellent qualities, and while the nation, whose history he has enriched, cherishes his renown, we feel that he is not ours alone. Genius, like air and light, is the gift of God, for the benefit of all his children; and the works of Thomas Crawford, like those of Phidias and Michel Angelo, may awaken thought and emotion long after the political glories of the Republic, which claims him as her son, shall have passed away.



At the regular monthly meeting of the CENTURY, held at the Club House, on Saturday evening, February 6th, 1858, the President, Hon. Gulian C. Verplanck, in the Chair, and a very large number of members present, Mr. George Wm. Curtis offered the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the CENTURY CLUB are hereby presented to our fellow-member, Thomas Hicks, for his eloquent, just, and sympathetic eulogy upon the late Thomas Crawford, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.

*Resolved*, That the President name a Committee of three to superintend the publication.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the President appointed Messrs. G. W. Curtis, A. M. Cozzens, and Edward Slosson as the Committee.

Mr. Curtis introduced the resolutions by saying:

MR. PRESIDENT: I rise to offer some resolutions in reference to the eulogy upon the late Thomas Crawford, recently read before the Club by our friend, Mr. Hicks.



It was not my good fortune to hear that simple, manly, faithful, and touching story of the sculptor's life and works, but I was one of the many thousands all over the land who felt, as they read it, that the genius which guides its author's pencil in the service of art, did not desert his pen in the service of friendship.

We may all, sir, have a different estimate of the genius of Crawford, and of the position to which he is entitled among sculptors, but none of us can deny that his great talent, and the circumstances which were so adequately stated in the eulogy, had conspired to make him the most conspicuous of American artists since Allston. And it was, therefore, peculiarly proper that a club of his countrymen, which has its origin in the generous instincts and humane sympathies from which art springs, should especially honor the memory of the artist. It is a serious duty for all of us who recognize the national importance of art and letters, to take care that the heroes of art and letters are honored as other heroes are; and I confess I should have gladly seen the whole city uniting in the commemoration of the other evening. If we bury with pomp and praise the statesman who devises great designs, and the



soldier who executes them; if the city follows the bier of some General who fought bravely in Mexico, or sets funeral flags for an English soldier falling for his country in a distant land,—and these honors are surely both just and natural,—so should it regard with equal regret, and mark with similar respect, the death of that other patriot, the artist.

A great national life springs from faith in noble ideas. Skepticism of generous principles precedes the decay of every state, and no man is a truer benefactor to his country, than he who fosters the national faith in ideas, by giving to thoughts of immortal beauty forms of imperishable grace. If Pericles were a patriot when his stern and persuasive tongue led the city against its will, not less a patriot was his friend Phidias who reared the lofty statue in whose shadow the orator spoke, and which gave the richest meaning to his words.

Now, in this country, where we need nothing more than to be constantly reminded that rich men and politicians, and a flourishing trade, are not enough to secure the best national results, it was hardly to be expected that the public at large would feel sufficient interest in such an event as a sculptor's death, to justify a more public ceremony. But for that reason, it is the more incumbent upon



the Club which invited this eulogy, and which is an association of men of every pursuit, whose common bond is sympathy with liberal and ennobling arts, to bear testimony of its faith before the world, by sanctioning the publication of this valuable contribution to the history of American Art.

I will not detain you, sir. I would willingly have said a few words of my personal recollections of Crawford; but his grave is closed, and I shall not ask you to linger by it longer. Only let me say this, that while his life approved him to the world as an artist, it was his death that set the seal to the man. Character is deeper than genius; life is better than art; and when I see Crawford, having climbed through doubt and disappointment to that height in which his position was recognized with pride at home, and acknowledged with admiration abroad,—with his face of blooming manhood set toward those alluring laurels, the glorious incentives of an equally glorious toil,—with youth, hope, love, and ambition smiling upon him as his foot was raised in the forward race,—and then mark the cold hand suddenly laid upon his shoulder, and hear the chill whisper breathed into his soul, "Canst thou also forbear?"—and then behold him, not without natural human re-



grets and longings, tranquilly resigning the great prizes of an earthly future, and breathing away his life in the arms of an unwearied love,—I cannot think that his work is unachieved; I cannot think that such a man dies prematurely. For his patient death crowns his busy life; and no man dies untimely who dies lamented like him: since to die lamented is to have been loved; and to have been so loved, is better than to have built the Parthenon with all its statues.







CRAWFORD'S CASE.







### CRAWFORD'S CASE.

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EXTRACT from a letter written by Mrs. Crawford to Thomas M. Cash, of Philadelphia, dated Paris, April 7, 1857:—

"It is very nearly a year since a slight protrusion of the ball of the left eye began to attract my attention, but it was attributed by Mr. Crawford to cold, to which he had often been subject; also to reading much and late at night in a reclining position, and always on the left side. This was in April last. I then left Rome for the United States, where he joined me in the month of July. On meeting him, after an interval of four months, I instantly perceived that the outward pressure of the eye had greatly increased, amounting to a slight disfigurement. You, of course, although you met him about this time, would not have been likely to detect it, not being familiar with every feature. In the course of a few weeks he was himself startled by seeing all objects doubled; this fact he became aware of, for the first time, on lying down one night in his usual posture for reading and finding interlinear lines on opening his book. The true focus of the eye was lost by the distension of one diseased. He was most unwilling to give the slightest attention or consideration to this trouble, always deluding himself with the hope that rest and quiet would restore the sight to its original integrity.



"In October, Mr. Crawford crossed the ocean (as you already know), the suffering in the eye steadily increasing, and accompanied by nervous headache. On reaching Paris he was recommended to consult Desmarres, an oculist of distinction here, who decided that a tumor of some kind was gradually forming behind the eye, and causing the protrusion; prescribed medicines both for internal and external use; and, I believe, urged Mr. Crawford to remain here until the tumor should either yield to the influence of his treatment or be matured for operation. He could not recognize the necessity for remaining, but made his journey to Rome, and plunged at once into his artist life there; making use of Desmarres' remedies only at intervals. The effect of these and his labors united was to increase greatly his distress in the head and the eye, while the latter became still more distorted. A physician was then called in to remove, if possible, the headaches, in which he was unsuccessful,—they continued unabated. On the 1st of December, Dr. Gibson, of your city, arriving in Rome, with letters of introduction, and a reputation of some skill as a surgeon, Mr. Crawford was induced to invite him to consult with his attending physician. The result was a proposition for Dr. Gibson to make an exploring operation on the following day and ascertain, if possible, the nature, size, etc., of the tumor. I copy Dr. Gibson's own account of the operation, sent to my uncle, Dr. Francis, of New York:—

"I performed a few days ago a slight operation upon Crawford, for the purpose of ascertaining the character of the tumor situated in the orbit of the left eye, and which has caused a protrusion of the ball half an inch beyond the surface of the right eye. I had hoped to find a sack containing a fluid, but nothing of the kind appeared, although I penetrated into the orbit to the depth of an inch and a half above the ball, and also through the conjunc-



tiva between the ball and the caruncula lachrymalis to the same extent. The only tumor I could find, or rather feel, was a projecting one from the orbital plate, near the cethnoid bone, about the size and shape of the end of a quill, and between a quarter and a half an inch long. Upon making an incision into it, I found it cartilaginous, but could not trace it behind the eye. I confess that, with all my experience, I find it very difficult to form a diagnosis of the disease, and am very unwilling to believe that it may turn out malignant.'

"From the sad consequences of this unfortunate exploration Mr. Crawford never recovered, the eye becoming more and more displaced. The steady pressure from behind by degrees dimming the sight, the eyelid thickening, a constant nausea and sickness, so that food of scarce any kind was retained, and finally frequent attacks of partial and temporary paralysis of the right side, were all symptoms which followed rapidly after Dr. Gibson's two incisions. In this condition a consultation was held by all the most eminent physicians in Rome, the result of which was that Mr. Crawford was ordered to Paris. It is quite true that the frequent attacks of paralysis made it doubtful whether he would ever reach Paris, and gave rise to the newspaper paragraph of which you speak in your letter. He did, however, arrive here with little inconvenience and suffering, even gaining strength and appetite; at Dijon he had his only paralysis, which, although very severe, passed off and left him quite comfortable again.

"Here he saw M. Nelaton, in whose hands he placed himself, together with Sichel the oculist, and Velpeau, another surgeon. Mr. Crawford had come hither full of confidence that these men of so great reputation would perform the proper operation, and in a few weeks he should be himself again and in his studio. I can scarcely describe to you the disappointment it was to him to know that none



could be effected. They did not tell him, as they told me, that to use the knife were worse than daring, and the consequences of an operation would be fatal in less than a week; nevertheless, he was forewarned that the cure would be extremely slow and dependent upon the application of certain ointments, the administration of various medicines.

"The tumor is believed and pronounced by all who have been consulted in this matter (and their name is legion) to be *cancerous*, to be also intimately adherent and even confounded with the internal and upper portion of the left orbit, and has, as I before noticed, displaced the eye in a manner most *pronounced*. Judging from the partial attacks of paralysis, it is supposed even to have so far encroached within the skull that it acts upon the brain. M. Nelaton, from whose written opinion I have translated the foregoing, adds, that in this state an operation would be not only more than daring, but inexcusable in his eyes, and in those of all men of science and experience. He considered the case hopeless from the beginning, but thinks the malady may run on through many months, perhaps a year.

"In a short time after the making use of prescribed remedies, Mr. Crawford seemed somewhat benefited; but ere long they were found to increase the lancinating, burning pains, and when I joined him, nearly two months ago, they (the medicines) had been abandoned.

"They have again, however, been attempted, but experience has taught me that all external applications do but torture the patient, without producing any good result. I came to him strong in courage and full of hope, and, despite M. Nelaton's conscientiously expressed opinions, I believed for a while that tender nursing combined with so vigorous a constitution would overcome the evil. Certainly the worst symptoms did for a while disappear, but only to return again with full force.

"Nelaton gradually fell away in his number of visits, and



finally ceased coming at all. He confessed himself too much pained in thus visiting an incurable case, and, under such circumstances, he suffered the whole affair to glide into the hands of an *élève* of his, Mr. Beylard, a Philadelphian, I believe, who is most faithful in his case, and who does not hesitate to seek advice from the other and older physicians when necessary. Two weeks ago every avenue and door of hope seemed closed against me. All the most unfavorable symptoms returned so frequently, that to look forward to a happy termination they bade me believe was madness and wilfulness on my part. And yet since then the dear patient invalid has again rallied, enjoying a returning appetite, long, refreshing sleep, freedom from pain, etc. . . . .

"Very truly yours,

"LOUISA W. CRAWFORD."

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RICHMOND, Va., May 2, 1857.

To the Editors of the "Philadelphia Evening Bulletin."

GENTLEMEN,—I have seen this morning in the "Richmond Enquirer," and in "The South," a letter, originally published in the "Bulletin," written by Mrs. Louisa W. Crawford, and addressed to Thomas M. Cash, of Philadelphia, dated Paris, April 7th, 1857. This letter describes the illness of Mr. Crawford, the distinguished American sculptor, and will, doubtless, be read with painful interest wherever he or his works are known. There is, however, a portion of the letter alluding to Dr. Gibson, late Professor of Surgery in the University of Pennsylvania, upon which, in his absence abroad, I feel it my duty to make some remarks. It seems that Mr. Crawford has a tumor growing from the orbit of the left eye and pressing upon the ball of the eye so as to cause it to pro-



trude from the socket, and that Dr. Gibson, being in Rome, was consulted about it and applied an exploring needle to it. Mr. Crawford's symptoms, it appears, grew worse after this exploration, and he left Rome for Paris to consult eminent surgeons there. These gentlemen pronounced the tumor cancerous, and one of them, M. Nelaton, abandoned the case as hopeless.

Mrs. Crawford manifestly believes, and intends to make others believe, that the operation performed by Dr. Gibson has had much to do with the unhappy condition of her distinguished husband, and it is against this conclusion that I feel it incumbent upon me to protest. All surgeons know and recognize the importance, indeed the necessity, of using means of exploration in cases whose nature is doubtful, and I am sure no medical man will admit any error of judgment on the part of Dr. Gibson in this matter; but the public may, perhaps, not know how important and how universally employed are the very means used in this case, to distinguish malignant from benignant formation. If the tumor is found to be non-malignant, it may be removed without fear of return, and without hazard of life; if malignant, the patient's condition cannot be made materially worse by the operation, for without or with it, he is doomed to certain death. Now, Mr. Crawford's case was one in which it was of great importance to have accurate information. He had consulted Desmarres in Paris, a most distinguished ophthalmic surgeon, and Desmarres was doubtful whether an operation might or might not be required, and was anxious that Mr. Crawford should remain in Paris, that he might decide that question. In the doubt, he would have used the exploring needle as Dr. Gibson did, and as all the surgeons would have done everywhere in the world.

I am sure I shall be sustained by the profession in the opinion that Dr. Gibson's operation upon Mr. Crawford



was not the cause of his hapless condition, and that from the very nature of the disease, "fatal from the first," in the language of Nelaton, such symptoms as Mrs. Crawford describes were inevitable.

Every allowance is to be made, Messrs. Editors, for the impressions which Mrs. Crawford, in her sorrow and suffering, may entertain, and it is very far from my wish or intention to cast the slightest reflection upon her motives, in thus making the name of Dr. Gibson painfully conspicuous in an event which may be considered almost a national calamity. It is solely my wish to remove the impression from the minds of non-professional readers of her published letter that Mr. Crawford's distressing condition has in any way been hastened or increased by my father's treatment.

I am, respectfully yours,

CHARLES BELL GIBSON, M. D.



## CIRCULAR FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

MR. CRAWFORD'S CASE — DR. GIBSON'S EXPLORATIONS.

LONDON, *July 10, 1857.*

In looking over, some time since, the "New York Evening Post," I was astonished to find a letter of May 2, from my son, Professor Charles Bell Gibson, of Richmond, Virginia, in reply to one of Mrs. Louisa W. Crawford, wife of Thomas Crawford, Esq., the celebrated American sculptor, of Rome, dated Paris, April 7, 1857, charging me with having seriously injured her husband by an explorative operation. I deem it necessary, in my own justification, to disabuse the American people on the subject; and in order to make my statement perfectly clear and intelligible to non-professional readers, — professional ones requiring no elucidation whatever, — I shall give a short history of Mr. Crawford's case. Whilst in Rome last winter I received from Mr. Crawford the following note: —

"VILLA NEGRONI, *December 2, 1856.*

"MY DEAR SIR, — Will you excuse the liberty I take in asking if you can make it convenient any hour after 11 o'clock to-day, to call at my house and give Dr. Smyth, who is attending me, the benefit of your advice regarding my eye. I fear this subject is becoming a serious one, and Dr. Smyth, having heard of your reputation, is desirous of consulting with you. An answer will much oblige, yours, very truly,

"THOMAS CRAWFORD."

I replied to Mr. Crawford's note immediately, and consented to meet Dr. Smyth at 12 o'clock the same day



Previous to examination of the case, I said to Dr. Smyth, "I resigned my professorship in the University of Pennsylvania, and my practice in Philadelphia some months since; am entirely out of the profession, and do not wish to engage in any case whatever. I am willing, however, to make an exception in favor of Mr. Crawford, inasmuch as I look upon him as a great artist, as an honor to my country, have taken a deep and abiding interest in his glorious achievements, and shall consider his loss a national calamity, should anything seriously befall him. Say to him, however, that I cannot regularly attend him, that my services must be gratuitous, that I will see him with you as often as I can, as a friend and countryman, and will do everything in my power to serve him as long as I remain in Rome, — which may be only for a short time, — for the sake of himself and interesting family, now separated from him by the broad Atlantic, and unaware of his danger, — which, I take from your account of it, to be imminent."

After minute examination and inquiry into the nature of the case, I remarked to Dr. Smyth, "It is evident that the eye, perfectly sound in itself, but pushed beyond the walls of the orbit more than half an inch, is acted upon by pressure from behind from a fluid or solid; that if by the former, an exploring needle might, by discharging it, cause the eye to resume its natural position, and be followed by a cure; that if, on the contrary, solid, and, particularly, if of malignant character, no essential benefit can result from any treatment whatever, and that the case must necessarily, in a few months, terminate fatally." Having obtained Mr. Crawford's consent to the use of the exploring needle, and being requested by Dr. Smyth to perform the operation, I engaged in it the next day with every precaution and with the utmost delicacy, and in a few minutes was able to ascertain, with the utmost accuracy, that there was no fluid, but a solid tumor, which not only



filled up the posterior part of the orbit, but might possibly have its origin in the brain. In this state of the case, I wrote to Dr. John W. Francis, of New York, an old acquaintance, an eminent physician, and the uncle of Mrs. Crawford. I wrote cautiously, not having fully made up my mind as to the real nature of the tumor, and not wishing to alarm Mrs. Crawford and her friends unnecessarily. To Mr. Hooker, the eminent banker of Rome, and the devoted friend of Mr. Crawford, I spoke with less reserve, and expressed my apprehension of the case being likely to terminate disastrously. In a short time I received a reply to my letter from Dr. Francis, and a postscript from Mrs. Crawford, thanking me in the kindest terms for the warm interest I had taken in Mr. Crawford's case, for my "philanthropy," &c. I wrote also to Mr. William Lawrence, one of the oldest and most eminent of the London surgeons, a gentleman of vast experience, and particularly skilled in affections of the eye and its appendages, stating Mr. Crawford's case and asking the benefit of his advice, and received from him in reply a most interesting letter, evincing great sagacity, but confessing his inability, from the peculiarity of the case and the complicated symptoms, to give a decided opinion. I need hardly remark that the small incision made by me through the skin and muscle of the upper eyelid, to admit of the easy introduction of the needle between the eyeball and upper orbital plate, and the puncture with the needle parallel with the base of the orbit, healed in a very few days, and no material inconvenience or exacerbation of symptoms followed the operation, as has been stated; in fact, no injury was done or could be done, as there were no important parts in the vicinity of the operation which, with ordinary anatomical knowledge and care, could suffer without being followed immediately by hemorrhage, the formation of matter, the protrusion of a fungus, or other visible ill consequences. The truth is, the



tumor, at the time of the operation, was rapidly upon the increase, and the symptoms which soon after displayed themselves would have been developed, there is reason to believe, whether an operation had been performed or not; indeed, it was not to be expected that a tumor, such as I soon after discovered it to be, should long remain quiescent. Mr. Crawford's friends were then told distinctly and unequivocally by Dr. Smyth and myself that little hope remained of his recovery. Nevertheless, every artist in Rome, except his true and sensible friend Chapman, thought it impossible that so great a man as Crawford could die at all. Crawford himself would never listen to the suggestion that there was danger; and I doubt whether at this moment, low as I understand he is, he does not cling tenaciously to the belief that he will soon be well. That his case had been of several years standing, he himself would never admit; that Mrs. Crawford knew to the contrary, and confessed it to their friend Mr. Terry, I have the authority of that gentleman for stating. At last it was determined, in a nondescript consultation of artists and doctors, — among whom were some very sensible men, — that Mr. Crawford should go to Paris and put himself under the care of the most eminent surgeons of that capital. Previously, however, to his taking this step, great anxiety was expressed by some of his friends that the eye and the tumor should be extirpated; and Mr. Crawford, it was believed, would willingly have submitted to the operation. I strongly protested against it, and positively refused to perform it, stating that Mr. Crawford would not live, if performed, an hour; that he might live, if let alone, several months, and an opportunity be thereby afforded of seeing Mrs. Crawford and his family. Mr. Hooker and nearly all his friends, particularly the artists, will bear testimony, I am sure, to my having taken this course; and to myself more than to any one else is Mrs. Crawford indebted for



the melancholy satisfaction of meeting her husband on this side of the grave. I need hardly remark that Mr. Crawford repaired to Paris, and placed himself under the care of surgeons of world-wide reputation, all of whom concurred with me in opinion, and approved of my practice to the fullest extent, as the following documents, kindly furnished in reply to the following circular addressed to them, will abundantly show:—

"CAMPAGNE DIODATI, NEAR GENEVA, }  
"SWITZERLAND, June 7, 1857. }

"DEAR SIR,— You had under your care some time ago Mr. Crawford, the celebrated sculptor, of Rome, on account of a tumor in the orbit, behind the left eyeball. Will you be so obliging as to say whether you consider the disease at present, or from the commencement, of a malignant nature, and whether it could have been produced or aggravated by an explorative operation, performed with great care, in two places, between the ball of the eye and orbit, without being followed by hemorrhage or much pain, the wounds healing almost immediately by the first intension? Permit me also to ask if the exploring needle is not employed all over the world, justifiably and advantageously, as a most important auxiliary in all doubtful cases, and whether the use of such needle can convert a benign tumor into a malignant one, and thereby produce a fatal result? I beg pardon for the trouble I give; and in asking a speedy reply to this letter, allow me to subscribe myself, very respectfully yours,

"WILLIAM GIBSON, M. D.

"To Messrs. VELPEAU, NELATON, DESMARRES, Paris."

To this interrogatory letter I speedily received the following replies:—

"PARIS, June 10, 1857.

"MUCH HONORED CONFRERE,— I saw Mr. Crawford twice only in consultation, at the commencement of this year, and it appeared to me that the tumor under which he labored was of a malignant nature.

"In my opinion it is absolutely impossible that an explorative



operation could be the cause of such disease, or could change the character of the tumor. The exploring needle is daily employed by all surgeons in doubtful cases, without ever being followed by the slightest injury.

Yours, truly,

"VELPEAU.

"To Professor WILLIAM GIBSON."

"PARIS, June 13, 1857.

"DEAR SIR AND HONORED CONFRERE, — I saw Mr. Crawford some months ago and ascertained that he suffered from a tumor, which originated in the cavity of the orbit, and caused a protrusion of the eyeball. This tumor is of a cancerous nature, and I am sure it has always presented the same character. It developed itself towards the superior and inner angle of the orbit, in the bony tissue. The symptoms which have existed for a long time leave no doubt that the tumor has extended towards the interior of the skull, and this is one of the reasons why we have declared that no operation whatever could be reasonably attempted for the cure of the patient. As for the explorative operation it was utterly incapable of aggravating the condition of the patient, which nothing in the world, it may be said, could aggravate, as the disease was from the beginning incurable. I do not think, moreover, that the degeneration of the tumor could have been produced or hastened by this operation. An explorative operation never produces such effects; and tumors, which sometimes have been supposed to have been converted into cancer, were from the commencement really cancerous; and I do not know of any fact that proves such transformation. I must add that explorative operations are made daily, and that the wounds from them are insignificant wounds, which heal in a few days. I think, therefore, that the aggravation which has been observed in Mr. Crawford's disease is an inevitable consequence of the nature of that disease from which he suffers, and that it can by no means be imputed to the operation. I assert this with the more confidence (*plus d'empressement*) as it is the result of thorough conviction on the subject; and I am astonished to be obliged to certify to a fact so very (*elementaire*) simple. Your devoted confrere,

"NELATON.

"To Professor WILLIAM GIBSON."



"PARIS, June 14, 1857.

"DEAR SIR, — It is with pleasure I answer each of your questions.

"1. I think that Mr. Crawford's disease has been from the commencement of a malignant nature. M. Velpeau entertains the same opinion.

"2. The explorative needle, in my opinion, and in that of every one else, can do no injury, if properly introduced between the globe of the eye and the walls of the orbit.

"3. The same needle is daily employed for the purpose of throwing light upon the nature and treatment of tumor.

"4. An explorative operation can never convert a benign tumor into a malignant one. Accept, sir, my respectful salutations,

"DESMARRES.

"Professor WILLIAM GIBSON."

Soon after my arrival in Paris, on the 23d of June, from Geneva, I called upon my friend Dr. Beylard, a native of Philadelphia, long resident in Paris, who, after having enjoyed the greatest medical advantages of that capital, now stands high in his profession, and is destined ere long to become — like Ricord, a Baltimorean — one of its brightest ornaments. Finding that he had been in attendance also upon Mr. Crawford, and was the intimate friend and correspondent of Mrs. Crawford, now with her husband in London, I requested him to furnish me with such documents on the subject in question as he could honorably and conscientiously afford. The following note will show, like those of his distinguished compeers, how little I deserve the censure bestowed upon me by Mrs. Crawford:—

"PARIS, June 27, 1857.

"DEAR DOCTOR, — In reply to your request as regards the explorative operation practised upon Mr. Crawford, my opinion is, that it was necessary, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the tumor developed behind the ball of the eye did not contain a fluid, — cysts of the orbit being often cured by this means.



"As to the point of converting, by any operation whatever, a simple tumor into one of a malignant character, I do not hesitate to say that I consider it an utter impossibility. I am perfectly convinced that the investigation made by you could not, in the slightest degree, aggravate the disease of our celebrated compatriot.

Very truly yours,

"E. BEYLARD.

"Professor GIBSON, Meurice's Hotel."

On the 29th June I called with Dr. Beylard to see my old friend Sichel, — the greatest oculist, in my estimation, upon earth, — who had recently recovered from a dangerous attack of pleurisy. In course of conversation Crawford's case came up, when he expressed his astonishment at the treatment I had received; and upon the contents of the letters of Velpeau, Nelaton, and Desmarres being reported to him, said at once, in his peculiarly animated style, "My testimony, if you desire it, shall be at your service immediately." Upon my replying in the affirmative, and thanking him for his kindness, he hurried us into his studio and wrote the following: —

"PARIS, June 29, 1857.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR, — Mr. Crawford's affection when I saw him — and I only saw him once — seemed to me an exostosis of the bones of the orbit. I proposed a general treatment. Whatever operation you may have practised in order to explore the nature of the disease, and whatever may be its actual nature, I am thoroughly convinced that your operation can have had no unfavorable influence on Mr. Crawford's local affection or general health. Believe me, my dear doctor, yours, very faithfully,

"SICHEL, M. D.

"Professor GIBSON."

It will be seen from the above statement and testimony how very unjust, to say the least, is the charge preferred against me by Mrs. Crawford, for whom and for whose husband I have always felt, from the moment of their affliction, the deepest sympathy. That she is capable of



forming an opinion on a medical or surgical subject, intelligent as she may be, and I dare say is, in her own sphere, I cannot possibly admit; nor can it be reasonably expected that I should quietly fold my arms and suffer my reputation to be assailed, through the kink or crotchet of any one, without any effort whatever to defend it. Had the question, however, been brought before the medical profession in any part of the world, and particularly before the thousands of medical men throughout the United States I have educated, in conjunction with my distinguished colleagues in the University of Pennsylvania, who well know and can appreciate my position, I should probably have remained perfectly silent. But I am now writing for the American people, for my countrymen out of the profession, before whom I have been painfully dragged. Can I be accused then of egotism if I put to them the question,—Is it possible that a graduate of the University of Edinburgh—a house pupil of Sir Charles Bell—an attendant upon the lectures of Abernethy, Sir Astley Cooper, Lawrence, and a host of other distinguished men—a Professor of Surgery of thirty-five years standing—as the successor of Dr. Physick in the University of Pennsylvania, recommended by him to the trustees of that University to fill the chair which he himself had so long filled with the highest honor to himself and his country—an army surgeon during the whole of the American war of 1812—a surgeon and clinical lecturer for twenty-five years in the Philadelphia Hospital (one of the largest hospitals in the world, styled by Miss Martineau “a palace for paupers”)—the author of extensive surgical works, well known in Europe and America, a surgeon who has performed hundreds of times, successfully, the most difficult and dangerous operations, in public and in extensive private practice; one whose hand has never been known to tremble, or sight to fail—could be guilty of the irresistibly ridiculous charge imputed to



him? I repeat, I put it to the American people — (a people with more native talent and tact and better practical education than any other people upon the face of the globe; a people from whom Crawford sprang, and from a poor, friendless, self-educated boy, raised himself by undaunted energy and perseverance to a height only exceeded, perhaps, by that of Canova or Thorwaldsen, and at last has fallen, not through any fault or negligence or ignorance, or want of sympathy on my part, but from exertions of his own which have addled the inmost texture of his brain, and converted its fine fabric into a mass of morbid degeneration, which God only in his infinite wisdom is able to remove) — yes, to the American people (who from Maine to California have heard of Crawford's noble works, and who would execrate the man whom they could imagine to have been, even remotely, the cause of his death), whether, independently of the testimony I have produced, and could produce to an unlimited extent, and that with all my opportunities and experience I could be such a dolt as to have inflicted injury by an operation any surgical tyro could have executed with perfect precision and ease?

I have noticed this charge, I may also add, not on my own account merely, — being fortunately independent either of public approbation or censure, — but for the sake of that profession which I still dearly love and honor, and to which I have devoted the best energies of a somewhat long, and, I trust, useful and conscientious life. But what encouragement can be held out for young men of the present day, too often "struggling for life among the waters," to enter upon a calling the most difficult, responsible, and ill-requited of all others, and after having reached its highest honors, to find themselves undeservedly condemned, and perhaps execrated, and that, in too many instances, after gratuitous services, rendered from the purest and most benevolent motives?



I hope I have said nothing throughout this statement bearing upon the motives of Mrs. Crawford, which I certainly do not mean to impeach in the slightest degree, or unbecoming to me as a gentleman. I sympathize deeply with her, as a devoted wife and mother, and as a lady of the highest character, exceedingly beloved by her friends, and cherished and admired wherever she is known. She has feelingly invoked, in her published statement, the assistance of a "most merciful High-Priest, a good and gracious God," to whose will she professes to bow with humble resignation. To this I respond, from the bottom of my heart, Amen! and with the utmost commiseration for her suffering husband, now slowly winging his way to a better world, and for herself and "shorn lambs," I respectfully subscribe myself,

WILLIAM GIBSON, M. D., LL. D.,

*"Emeritus" Professor of Surgery in the  
University of Pennsylvania.*

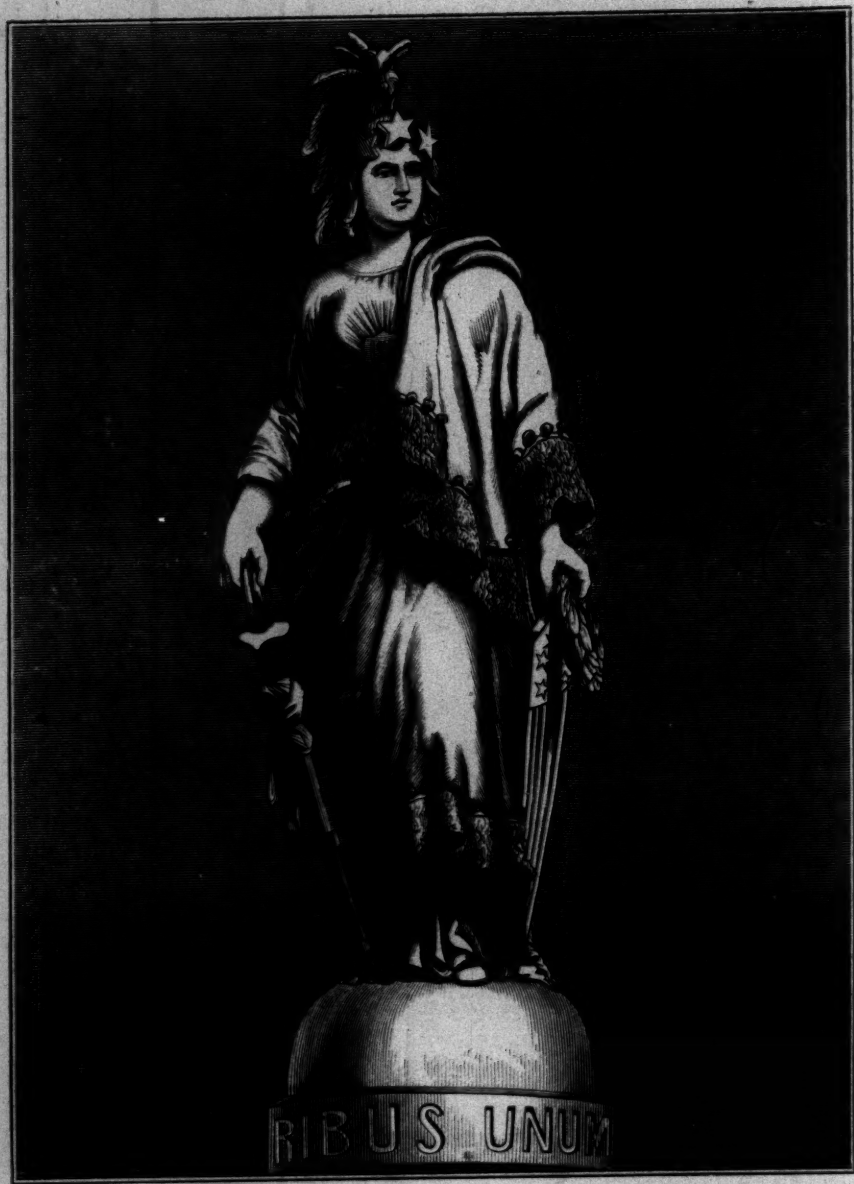


## CORRESPONDENCE

RELATIVE TO THE

STATUE OF FREEDOM, DESIGNED BY CRAWFORD  
WHICH SURMOUNTS THE DOME OF THE  
CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.







## CORRESPONDENCE

ARCHITECTS' OFFICE, U. S. CAPITOL, }  
WASHINGTON, D. C., April 20, 1864. }

HON. JOHN H. RICE,

*Chairman of Committee on Public Buildings and  
Grounds, House of Representatives:*

SIR,—In compliance with the request contained in your note of the 14th inst., I have the honor to submit the following:—

First. You inquire whether the crest on the Statue of Freedom on the dome of the United States Capitol, is "in accordance with the original design?" to which I respectfully reply, that it conforms, in every particular, to what is understood to be the "original design;" viz: the design of Mr. Thomas Crawford, approved by Jefferson Davis, who at that time held the office of Secretary of War.

The considerations which led the artist to adopt this particular form of crest or helmet, are stated in the annexed correspondence, which embraces all that I can find on the subject on the files of this office.

The plaster model, from which this statue was cast, was made in Rome by Mr. Crawford, and shipped to this country; the bronze casting was executed from it by Mr. Clarke Mills, without the slightest alteration, so that it is precisely what Mr. Crawford intended that it should be. The annexed photograph, marked B, exhibits this



design. I have caused the original plaster model to be preserved, with the view of having it put up in the old Hall of Representatives, where it was formerly placed for exhibition; or in the Rotunda, as may hereafter be deemed most expedient.

You inquire, secondly, "whether, and in what manner, and at what cost, the said crest can be removed?" To these interrogatories I have to say, that the mere removal of the crest would not cost more than about three hundred dollars, provided it were done before the scaffolding, which now remains, is removed; the chief expense would be incurred in constructing proper apparatus, on the present scaffolding, to lower it after it is detached from the figure. The annexed photograph of the upper part of the statue, marked C, which was taken from the plaster model while it stood in the old Hall of Representatives, will show the manner in which the crest is united to the head. It will be observed that the connection is so small that it may be cut off without difficulty.

In the third place you ask, whether, in my judgment, "it is advisable to remove this crest?" To this inquiry I may be permitted to say, that I have always considered it a very objectionable feature of the figure; but the removal of it alone would leave the statue imperfect, as a work of art. The idea of leaving the head bare could not be entertained for a moment; the figure is so formed, and so draped, and so armed, that some kind of a head ornament is absolutely necessary; to omit it would subject us to the severest criticism.

If, therefore, the crest were removed, it would be necessary to substitute one of a different design, or a wreath, as in Mr. Crawford's first sketch, or some other crowning feature consistent with the character of the statue. This can only be done by remodelling the head, with its crowning ornament, and recasting the whole upper section of



the figure. This would protract the work many months, and cost several thousand dollars; these are considerations which should not be overlooked.

What I would most regret in changing the present head would be the opening again of the statue after it has been so securely and so perfectly put together. The weight of the upper section, which embraces the head, is two thousand seven hundred pounds; it would, therefore, be necessary, in order to remove it, to reconstruct the original scaffolding, and to replace the hoisting apparatus with which the statue was raised.

All this, however, can readily be accomplished if the object to be attained should be deemed worth the expense that would be incurred, and the delay it would occasion.

In view of all the considerations suggested by a thorough examination of the subject, I am decidedly of the opinion that the crest on the statue should be suffered to remain without alteration.

It is now precisely as it came from the hands of one of the most distinguished artists our country has ever produced, and he is no more among the living. I would, therefore, be inclined to let it remain as it is, even though there were less difficulties in the way of effecting a change in the design.

I have the honor to remain, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

THO. U. WALTER,

*Architect of the U. S. Capitol Extension, &c.*



## MR. CRAWFORD TO CAPT. MEIGS.

ROME, June 20, 1855. }  
 Villa Negroni. }

CAPT. M. C. MEIGS:

DEAR SIR,—I herewith enclose two photographs from my design for a statue to surmount the dome of the Capitol.

In my last letter of the 10th present, I alluded to the subject and regretted the absence of my photographer from Rome, by which I was prevented from forwarding the design to you at that time.

I have endeavored to represent Freedom triumphant in Peace and War; the wreath on the head has a double signification, all allusion to this,—one half of it being composed of wheat sprigs, the other half of laurel. (See photograph annexed, marked A.)

In her left hand she holds the olive-branch, while her right hand rests on the sword which sustains the shield of the United States. These emblems are such as the mass of the people will easily understand.

In order to connect the richness of effect in the statue gradually with the architecture of the dome, I have introduced a base surrounded by wreaths, indicative of the rewards Freedom is ready to bestow upon distinction in the arts and sciences.

The arch of a dome is shown merely to explain what kind of position the statue is designed to occupy.

Should the design for the statue be approved, we may enter then upon particulars regarding its proportions and expense. This last item cannot be excessive, as the model would not require a high degree of finish; but, on the











contrary, should be modelled with great boldness and spirit, considering the height it would be placed upon—

I remain, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

THOMAS CRAWFORD.

MR. CRAWFORD TO CAPT. MEIGS.

ROME, *October 18, 1855.* }  
Villa Negroni. }

CAPT. M. C. MEIGS:

DEAR SIR,—I herewith enclose the new design I have just completed for the dome statue, promised by my letter of the 18th ult. I was in hopes to have had it ready at an earlier date than the present, but an accumulation of various affairs in my studio, occasioned by my absence from Rome, has prevented me from using more despatch.

I have endeavored, in the design I now send you, to sketch a statue more in accordance with the architecture of the dome than I was able to do before seeing the tracing you favored me with recently. You will observe that I have also composed the pedestal, adhering strictly to the proportions in Mr. Walter's plan, with the exception of raising a trifle the band, upon which I have engraved our national motto, and giving a little more width to the portion of the base where I have placed the wreaths.

The ungraceful termination upon which the statue stands in Mr. Walter's plan is, I think, improved by the introduction of the globe, which has a certain significance, surmounted as it is by a statue of armed Liberty, and supported by the emblems of Justice triumphant, as indicated by the wreaths placed at the foot of each emblem.



It is quite possible that Mr. Jefferson Davis may, as upon a former occasion, object to the *Cap* of Liberty and the fasces. I can only say, in reply, that the work is for the people, and they must be addressed in language they understand, and which has become unalterable for the masses.

The emblems I allude to can never be replaced by any invention of the artist. All that can be done is to add to them, as I have done, by placing the circlet of stars around the cap of Liberty; it thus becomes more picturesque, and nothing of its generally understood signification is lost. I might, did time permit, enter upon a lengthy argument to show how sculpture is limited in the use of accessories, and that those only of the simplest and most intelligible character can be admitted, particularly in works destined for the instruction and gratification of the public. All arguments, however, must reduce themselves into the question: "Will the people understand it?" I therefore hope the Secretary will allow the emblems to "pass muster."

I have said the statue represents "armed Liberty"; she rests upon the shield of our country, the triumph of which is made apparent by the wreath held in the same hand which grasps the shield; in her right hand she holds the sheathed sword, to show the fight is over for the present, but ready for use whenever required.

The stars upon her brow indicate her heavenly origin; her position upon the globe represents her protection of the *American* world; the justice of whose cause is made apparent by the emblems supporting it.

I have draped the statue with especial regard to its presenting an agreeable contour in all views; a greater use of drapery would give an indistinct character to the statue at the height it would be placed. I have allowed fifteen feet as the height of the statue, taking as my scale the proportion marked in the tracing of the dome. I con-



sider this about a proper size in relation to the dome, if examined as a drawing placed under the eye; but I would recommend that at least eighteen inches more be added to the height of the statue in execution, otherwise it will appear short when seen from below.

The cross on St. Peter's here is just fourteen feet three inches, and its base, commencing on the top of the ball, is about four hundred and fifty feet from the ground. The elevation of Mr. Walter's entire plan is, if I understand it correctly, two hundred and ninety-four feet from the ground. Had a statue, instead of a cross, been placed upon St. Peter's, it could not have been less than twenty-two feet six inches in height; this is the height given for ball and cross. Therefore, taking into consideration that the entire height of St. Peter's, comprising the cross, is four hundred and sixty-five feet, while the Capitol is two hundred and ninety-four, including the statue,—thus showing a difference in relative total height of one hundred and seventy feet,—it will be seen that sixteen feet six inches would be a fair proportion for the statue to crown the dome of the Capitol. You will be able to make the comparison by consulting the work entitled, "The Basilica of the Vatican," published in Rome, 1845; plate ix. Vol. I. gives the elevation of St. Peter's, with its measurements, in Roman palms: the palm is about two eighths over nine inches English. These particulars may, perhaps, facilitate your decision regarding the statue.

I hope the design I now send may be considered a sufficient modification of the first, and that it may meet with your approbation.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

THOMAS CRAWFORD.



## CAPT. MEIGS TO JEFFERSON DAVIS.

OFFICE EXTENSION U. S. CAPITOL, &c., &c., }  
WASHINGTON, January 11, 1856. }

HON. JEFFERSON DAVIS, *Secretary of War*:

MY DEAR SIR,—I enclose a letter from Mr. Crawford, with two photographs which he has sent me as sketches for the statue to surmount the dome.

The design adopted by Congress included a crowning statue, sketched slightly, and merely indicating a statue, not the design of that statue.

Mr. Crawford sent the first, or smaller photograph, before he had seen the design of the dome itself. It is intended to stand upon the summit of a dome, and is, though very graceful in its composition, too heavy for the summit of a lantern. I wrote to him upon receiving it, sending a tracing of the drawing of the whole dome, and suggesting that he might, perhaps, be disposed to modify his sketch when he saw the pedestal upon which it was to stand.

I enclose his letter in reply to this communication, in which he speaks of the alterations he has thought proper to make, and with which I received the second photograph. There is, perhaps, less grace, but much more vigor in the second figure, and its strongly marked lines and shadows will, I think, give it a striking effect even at the height of three hundred feet, at which it is to stand.

The treatment must be very bold in order to prevent a figure at this height from looking indistinct.

The price Mr. Crawford names for the model is three thousand dollars.

The figure can be executed either by casting in bronze in several pieces, or by casting certain parts, as the head



and arms, etc., and beating up the draperies from their plates of copper or bronze. Into this, however, it is not necessary to enter yet.

Mr. Crawford has shipped the model of the America, and the Woodman for the pediment, and the other figures are well advanced.

If the design for this figure meets your approbation, I shall be pleased to communicate it to Mr. Crawford, and give him the authority to begin the full-sized model.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

M. C. MEIGS, *U. S. Engineers,*  
*In charge Extension U. S. Capitol, &c., &c*

#### JEFFERSON DAVIS TO CAPT. MEIGS.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, January 15, 1856. }

SIR,—The second photograph of the statue with which it is proposed to crown the dome of the Capitol impresses me most favorably. Its general grace and power, striking at first view, has grown on me as I studied its details.

As to the cap, I can only say, without intending to press the objection formerly made, that it seems to me its history renders it inappropriate to a people who were born free and would not be enslaved.

The language of Art, like all living tongues, is subject to change: thus the bundle of rods, if no longer employed to suggest the functions of the Roman Lictor, may lose the symbolic character derived therefrom, and be confined to the single signification drawn from its other source,—the fable teaching the instructive lesson that in



Union there is strength. But the liberty-cap has an established origin, in its use as the badge of the freed slave; and though it should have another emblematic meaning to-day, a recurrence to that origin may give to it in the future the same popular acceptance which it had in the past.

Why should not armed Liberty wear a helmet? Her conflict being over, her cause triumphant, as shown by the other emblems of the statue, the visor would be up so as to permit, as in the photograph, the display of a circle of stars, expressive of endless existence and of heavenly birth.

With these remarks, I leave the matter to the judgment of Mr. Crawford; and I need hardly say to you, who know my very high appreciation of him, that I certainly would not venture, on a question of art, to array my opinion against his.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

JEFFERSON DAVIS,

*Secretary of War.*

CAPT. M. C. MEIGS,

*In charge of Capitol Extension,  
Washington City.*

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CAPT. MEIGS TO MR. CRAWFORD.

*January 16, 1856.*

THOMAS CRAWFORD, Esq.,

Villa Negroni, Piazza dei Termini,  
Rome, Italy:

MY DEAR SIR, — I enclose copies of correspondence with the Secretary of War in relation to the two designs for the statue to crown the dome.











You will see that his letter enables me to authorize you to begin the model full size, upon the terms proposed in your letter enclosing the second photograph.

You will notice what Mr. Davis says in regard to the vexed question of the liberty-cap, and I must, as he does, leave the matter to your own judgment.

I hope you will have as much pleasure in executing the commission as I have in giving it, and that you may win a large reputation from the execution of this central statue of the United States.

I am, very truly and respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

M. C. MEIGS, *Capt. of Engineers.*

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MR. CRAWFORD TO CAPT. MEIGS.

ROME, *March 19, 1856.* }  
Villa Negroni. }

CAPT. M. C. MEIGS:

DEAR SIR,—The enclosed photographs must be my apology for not answering before now your letter of January 16th, containing copies of correspondence with the Honorable Secretary of War, relative to the dome statue.

Upon receipt of your letter, I at once determined to remodel the design of the statue, and to combine, if possible, the grace of the original design with the lightness of the second.

I read with much pleasure the letter of the Honorable Secretary, and his remarks have induced me to dispense with the "cap," and put in its place a helmet, the crest of which is composed of an eagle's head, and a bold arrangement of feathers suggested by the costume of our Indian tribes. I have placed upon the heart of the statue



the initials of our country, and the drapery is so arranged as to indicate *rays* of light proceeding from the letters. (See photograph annexed, marked B.)

No other explanation is necessary, unless it be to say that I think the present design more original than the previous ones, and more *American*. I hope the Honorable Secretary will look upon it as a proof of my desire to merit a continuation of his confidence in my abilities. I must mention that the *height* of this statue, from the foot to the extreme point of the feathers of the helmet, represents *eighteen feet nine inches*; thus exceeding (by two feet about) the height given in the last design.

The base, including the globe, is of the same proportions as drawn in Mr. Walter's plan.

I have now commenced preparations for putting up the model of the statue, and though I do not anticipate any further change in its arrangement, I may, in the course of working upon it, make some improvements, — retaining, however, the main features.

I remain, very truly,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

THOMAS CRAWFORD.

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#### INDORSEMENT.

*April 21, 1856.*

The third and last study is to my taste admirable, fulfilling every want.

(Signed)

J. D.



NOTES.







## NOTES.

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1. JOHN GIBSON, an English sculptor, settled at Rome, was born in 1790 in or near the town of Conway, North Wales. He was, at the age of thirteen, bound apprentice to a cabinet-maker, with whom he remained about three years. Being disgusted with his occupation, and refusing to work, he was threatened with imprisonment, when he declared his determination to become a sculptor, and his preference of serving his time in prison to continuing in his present employment. Mr. Gibson had by this time been brought to the notice of Mr. Roscoe, who proved a most kind and appreciative friend. He advised the young artist to visit Rome, and collected the sum of £250 to enable him to do so. He accordingly left England in October, 1817, with letters to the Marquis Canova from Lord Brougham and Fuseli. On his arrival in Rome he was received by Canova as his pupil, and remained with him until his (Canova's) death, which occurred five years afterwards; when Gibson placed himself under the tuition of Thorwaldsen.

Mr. Gibson was elected an associate of the Royal Academy of London in 1833, and was decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honor for his works exhibited at the Paris Exhibition. He has been admitted a member of all the art academies of Europe. With the Cheva-



lier Tenarani he now holds the highest place among the sculptors settled at Rome.

2. ROBERT F. LAUNITZ is by birth a Russian. In 1822 he went, at the age of fifteen, to Rome, to study sculpture. The first three years he passed in the studio of his uncle, a celebrated pupil of Thorwaldsen and the artist of the Monument of Guttenberg, in Frankfort-on-the-Main. After passing some seven years in Italy, Mr. Launitz came to New York, where, in 1830, he joined in business Mr. John Frazee, then the best sculptor in America, afterwards the architect of the Custom-House. Mr. Launitz still continues his business of monumental sculptor in this city.

3. Dr. PAUL RUGA was a Roman physician and chemist of celebrity, to whom Crawford carried letters of introduction from Launitz. The young artist, overtasking himself by study day and night, contracted the very dangerous fever to which foreigners in Rome are liable. For a long time his life was threatened, and to Dr. Ruga, who gave him all attention and assistance, he owed his recovery. Dr. Ruga afterwards fell a victim to the pestilence in Egypt, whither he had been sent as chief of a commission from the Pope to write a treatise on the plague.

4. THORWALDSEN, an eminent sculptor, native of Denmark, was born on the 19th of November, 1770. He became established in Rome in 1796, was a most indefatigable artist, and his productions were numerous. Of his statues of Greek subjects, as Mars, Mercury, Ganymede, the Graces, Venus, Hebe, Psyche, and others of the pseudo-classic school, it is not necessary to say more than that they bear the stamp of the master-hand. His colossal statue of Christ, executed for a church in Copenhagen,



stands preëminent among modern works in sculpture, and his statues of the Twelve Apostles, for the same church, are admirable specimens of his deep feeling and judicious treatment. Among the more important portrait works of this artist are an equestrian statue of Prince Maximilian of Bavaria, also a fine seated figure of Galileo, and another of Byron, now at Cambridge.

Thorwaldsen died at Copenhagen on the 25th of March, 1844. He attended the theatre, as was his custom, in the evening of that day, suddenly fell back in his chair in a fit of apoplexy, and, although he was immediately conveyed home and received the most anxious attention, he expired without speaking.— *Condensed from Encyclopedia Britannica.*

5. JOHN KENYON, an English poet, was the son of a wealthy planter in the Island of Jamaica, where he was born about 1783. He was sent to England to receive his education, and was graduated at Peterhouse College, Cambridge. His first volume of poetry, entitled "A Rhymer's Plea for Tolerance" (1833), was followed in 1838 by "Poems, for the most part Occasional." His last work was entitled, "A Day at Tivoli, with other Verses." He used his large fortune with great generosity, and is said to have left legacies to eighty persons, many of whom were his old literary friends, including Barry Cornwall (£6000) and Mr. and Mrs. Browning (£10,000). He died at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, December 3, 1856.

6. CHARLES SUMNER was born in Boston, January 6th, 1811. He received his early education at the Boston Latin School, was graduated at Harvard College in 1830, and admitted to the Bar in 1834. In 1837 he visited Europe, where he remained until 1840, travelling in Italy, Germany, and France, and residing for nearly a year in



England. He was elected to the Senate of the United States from Massachusetts in 1850. In the debate on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and on the contest in Kansas, Mr. Sumner took a very prominent part. His last speech upon this topic occupied two days in its delivery, — May 19th and 20th, 1856. Some passages in it greatly incensed the members of Congress from South Carolina, one of whom, Preston S. Brooks, on May 22d, assaulted Mr. Sumner while writing at his desk in the Senate Chamber, and with a cane struck him on the head till he fell to the floor insensible. The injury thus received was followed by a severe disability, from which he did not completely recover for three or four years. He went to Europe, for the benefit of his health, in March, 1857, and returned in the autumn to resume his seat in the Senate, to which he had been reelected by the Legislature of Massachusetts by an almost unanimous vote. His health being still impaired, he went abroad again in May, 1858, returning in the autumn of 1859. His first serious effort after the restoration of his health was an elaborate speech in the Senate entitled, "The Barbarism of Slavery," in which he denounces the influence of slavery on character, society, and civilization. He has since continued his efforts in the Senate against the social evil of the South, — being thoroughly opposed to any concession to, or compromise with, slavery. He has always insisted on emancipation as the speediest mode of bringing the war to a close. Since March, 1861, he has been Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and in a speech delivered January 9th, 1862, he argued that the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, on board the steamer "Trent," was unjustifiable, on the principles of international law which had always been maintained by the United States.



7. THE RICHMOND MONUMENT. "When, on the evening of his arrival, Crawford went to see for the first time his Washington in bronze at the Munich foundry, he was surprised at the dusky precincts of the vast area; suddenly torches flashed illumination on the magnificent horse and rider, and simultaneously burst forth, from a hundred voices, a song of triumph and jubilee. Thus the delighted Germans congratulated their gifted brother, and hailed the sublime work, typical to them of American freedom, patriotism, and genius. The Bavarian king warmly recognized its original merits and consummate effect; the artists would suffer no inferior hands to pack and dispatch it to the sea-side; peasants greeted its triumphal progress; the people of Richmond were emulous to share the task of conveying it from the quay to Capitol Hill; mute admiration, followed by ecstatic cheers, hailed its unveiling, and the most gracious native eloquence inaugurated its erection. . . . .

"By a singular and affecting coincidence the news of Crawford's death reached the United States simultaneously with the arrival of the ship containing this colossal bronze statue of Washington, 'his crowning achievement.'"—*Tuckerman's Portraits of Washington.*







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